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AUTHOR Cannon, Geneva
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ABSTRACT

Practical suggestions for creating and maintaining a productive and positive classroom environment are presented in this guide for substitute teachers. Suggestions for executing emergency lesson plans as well as tips for effective management techniques are included. Substitutes are advised to: visit the school or call the teacher ahead of time if possible; arrive early to review teaching materials and learn procedures; be prepared and have necessary materials ready; stand near the door to greet the students and be friendly, calm, courteous, and firm; inform the students about the situation; give the lesson objective and keep students on task; summarize the day's lesson and activities for both the students and the teacher; and complete any housekeeping responsibilities. (JH)

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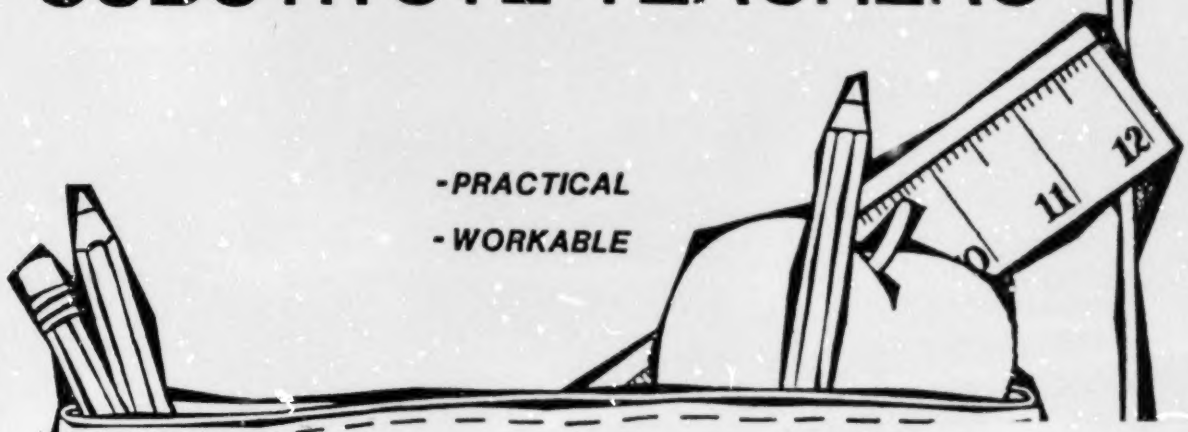
SURVIVAL GUIDE

FOR

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS



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Worcester County Public Schools

Professional Development

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INTRODUCTION

To keep students productively engaged in learning activities during the absence of the classroom teacher, substitutes must thoroughly understand and execute not only emergency lesson plans but also effective management techniques and strategies.

Following are some general guidelines that you as a substitute teacher will probably wish to consider as you strive to provide a positive classroom climate for students to learn, to interact, and to have fun in the process.

As you review this guide, remember four important facts:

(a) No intent was made in this presentation to cover every major area of concern that you might have regarding classroom management.

(b) Suggestions offered are not foolproof and guaranteed to work in every given similar situation that you might encounter. Variables do intervene and you must be prepared to make adjustments whenever necessary.

(c) Different schools have in-house procedures based on their own system's needs and peculiarities; it will therefore be extremely essential for you to become familiar with the expectations of each school that you serve.

(d) An effective substitute teacher recognizes the importance of thorough pre-class preparation as a key to successful classroom management.

Geneva Cannon

Coordinator

Staff Development

THE DAY BEFORE

Visit the school or call the teacher for instructions.

If you are notified at least one day in advance that you will be substituting, visit the school or call the teacher to discuss emergency lesson plans, classroom procedures, and any special duties the teacher expects you to perform.

THE MORNING OF

Arrive to school early.

Review teacher's materials and other information.

Ask questions.

There will be times - many, many times, in fact, in which you will be called the very morning that you are to report for "active duty." Report to school as early as possible. Report to the principal or whoever is responsible for substitutes. Review the teacher's lesson plans, materials, and duty roster. Make sure that you know and understand the school's schedule for the day, especially adjustments for assemblies or other special activities. It could be kind of embarrassing for you if 27 students missed lunch because you didn't know that the day's lunch schedule had been changed. It is also advisable to ask about the teacher's administrative responsibilities such as reporting class attendance, collecting lunch money, monitoring bathrooms, etc. Inquire about students with special needs who will be in your class and know how to handle each situation. For example, you certainly would need to be aware of children who have hearing or vision impairments or are subject to seizures. If an accident occurs in your room, you should know the proper procedure for reporting the incident and assisting the child.

BEFORE CLASS

BE PREPARED.

Be prepared.

1. Know your emergency lesson plan and be ready to work that plan. Oh, the teacher didn't leave you a plan? Effective subs don't scream, fret, and berate the teacher; they just look in their notebook collection of prepared general lesson plans and choose a "filler."

Have necessary materials ready.

2. Have books, equipment, materials, and supplies available and easily accessible for student use. Sending to the storage room for workbooks, construction paper, etc. after class has begun wastes valuable time that students should be using in a meaningful learning experience.

3. If you have to check attendance and complete other administrative tasks requiring the use of special forms, all materials, including rollbook or roster, absentee notes or whatever, should be placed orderly on your desk for immediate use. Avoid wasting time after class has begun searching desk drawers for informational materials.

In essence, be prepared. Help your class function smoothly and orderly.

HERE THEY COME

Stand near/at the classroom door.

Be
-visible.
-accessible.
-friendly.
-calm.
-courteous.
-firm.

1. As students are entering your room, position yourself near/at the door so that you can be visible and accessible to students at the entranceway and in the classroom.

2. Greet students with a smile and a friendly "Hello" as they enter the room. Remember, you are a loving, caring substitute teacher and not a drill sergeant with a group of raw recruits.

3. If students immediately begin making requests (or demands) to leave the room for a drink of water, a bathroom break or forgotten books in their lockers, calmly, courteously and firmly say "no" followed by a reason such as "The bell will ring within 30 seconds and class will begin at that time." If a student persists, reiterate: "No, I'm sorry. You may not go to _____."

WHEN THE BELL RINGS

Walk purposefully into the classroom.

Stand front center.

1. Don't linger at the door. Rather, walk into the room and begin class immediately. By the way, don't saunter in; walk purposefully to the front center of the room, giving an indication that something important is about to happen. What if nothing important is about to happen? Fake it.

Get students' attention.

2. If students are standing after the bell rings and they should be seated, as soon as you are to the front of the room say, "Be seated, please. We are ready to begin class." Don't forget to be pleasant in making that request. Talk loud enough for everyone to hear but don't attempt to talk over loud noise. Please don't YELL! There is no need to YELL! After you have asked everyone to sit down, stand quietly a few seconds to give students time to follow through.

Greet entire class.

3. Greet the entire class with a friendly "Good Morning" or whatever is appropriate. Smile, Smile, Smile; it only takes 14 muscles. And if you think you'll have problems getting those 14 muscles to work, begin practicing now by standing in front of a mirror.

Tell students
-who you are.
-why you are there.

4. If students don't know your name, tell them who you are, why you are there, and a little bit about yourself (Note, I said a little bit). If you have a name that is infrequently heard in the geographical area, pronounce it for the children at least twice. Write your name on the board. If your name is quite uncommon (Pigg, Grass, etc.) and has been easy prey for jokes over the years, be assured that a few students in your classroom will think of others to add to your repertoire. Before these students have a chance to share their jokes with the class, you might consider telling them one or two jokes that people have made in the past.

Tell students why their teacher is absent and when the teacher is expected to return.

It is also advisable to tell students why their teacher is absent and when the teacher is expected to return. Providing this information alleviates speculation and lots of why and how long questions. Be sure to share only general information when you talk about the "why." If the teacher is ill, simply say that; there is no need to provide a detailed medical report.

Well, enough of this! From the ringing of the bell (Number 1) to this point (Number 4), you have used approximately three minutes of class time. Let's get on with the lesson.

GETTING THE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY GOING

Look alive; Be vivacious.

1. First, get a new look of excitement on your face. Really look alive now, letting students know that you are happy to be with them. (You are, aren't you?)

Give lesson objective.

2. Now, take a few minutes to give students the lesson objectives. By the way, the objectives should be visible to students at all times during the class period; therefore, it will be necessary to have them on the chalkboard or dittoed and placed on students' desks before they arrive. As you review the objectives with students, be clear and concise; make sure students know what they are to do, how to do it, and what to do after they have finished their work.

KEEPING STUDENTS ON TASK

Assist students as they work.

1. If students have individual seatwork or small group activities to do, go from student to student or group to group assisting and providing support. Whenever possible, sit with the group or beside the individual student with whom you are working. Please don't sit behind the teacher's desk and read, or worse, stand and stare.

*****

Handle special problems discreetly.

At this point, one of the students who asked you earlier about going to the bathroom approaches you again with the same request. What should you do? You better use your "best" judgment. Remember, this student has asked you twice.

*****

Keep learning activities moving at smooth, steady pace - Avoid wasting time.

2. If the lesson is more substitute teacher-directed, keep the learning experience moving at a smooth, steady pace. Don't allow activities to drag on and become boring to you and the students. When it's time to make a transition from one part of the lesson to another, give a closure and then provide clear, concise instructions for the next activity.

WRAP-UP

Summarize.

1. A few minutes later, you glance at the clock and discover that the end of class is rapidly approaching. Wow! How time flies when everyone is having fun. At this moment, you and your students begin summarizing the day's lesson, crystalizing key points covered.

Give homework assignment.

2. The teacher left reinforcement homework. Give the assignment, review instructions, and have students begin work on the activity. You move around the room as students work, providing assistance whenever necessary and praising students for what they have done well or have attempted.

Give follow-up appetizer.

3. If you know what the teacher's follow-up lesson will be, give students enough to whet their appetites.

Have students do housekeeping chores.

4. It's time for students to do a few housekeeping chores such as returning borrowed materials to shelves, removing scrap paper from inside their desks, etc. If you want to create havoc in the classroom, just tell everyone to "clean up." Twenty-seven bodies move, almost at once, in different directions, talking and sometimes yelling directions to one another. It is not advisable to give students a directive to do things without telling them "how" they are to be done. For example: "Everyone, place your dictionaries on the front right of your desk so they can be collected and returned to the shelves. Millie will collect all dictionaries from students in rows one and two and place them on shelf A; Jason will collect all dictionaries from students in rows three and four and return them to shelf B." Once this chore has been completed, you may give additional instructions such as "When the bell rings, everyone will stand and push their chairs back to their desks. Students in row one will then leave the room to be followed by row two and so on. You should take all scrap paper with you and drop it in the trash can by the door as you leave."

End class on a positive note.

5. End class on a positive note. Tell students that you have enjoyed working with them. Thank students for their cooperation and assistance throughout the class period. Also indicate that if there is ever a need for a substitute in that class again, you hope that you'll be considered.

RING, RING

Listen to students' feedback regarding class; listen to your thoughts.

The class ends. The students leave orderly. Twenty-seven of twenty-nine chairs are in place and only three pieces of scrap paper missed the trash can. Two students paused on their way out to tell you how great class was; another student mumbled that it was okay. What do you think?

THE FINALE

Write the teacher a summary of the day's activities.

1. Your last class is over - the end of the school day. It's time to leave, right? Wrong. It's now time to write the teacher a brief summary of your day's work. In your report, comment on how well the students worked and cooperated with you and other students. List lesson activities that you did not have a chance to finish with students and the reasons for incompleteness. Summarize unusual occurrences in class such as a fight between two students. Describe the incident and your follow through procedure. Always close your report with a positive statement. Attach a list of names of students who were absent from each class. This is also a perfect time to sort and clip (or place in file folders) students hand-ins according to class and place them in a neat stack on the teacher's desk. Leave manuals, lesson plans, and summary in the teacher's desk drawer unless you have been instructed to do otherwise.

Leave important materials (guides, manuals) in appropriate place.

Finish housekeeping chores.

2. What else needs to be done? Well, for one thing, you need to leave the classroom in order, including the teacher's desk. Remember those two chairs that were not to their desks? You would certainly place them back. You might also pick up the three pieces of scrap paper on the floor. If necessary, close venetian blinds, turn off light, lock the door, or complete any other related housekeeping responsibilities required.

Complete administrative tasks.

3. Go by the main office to finish final administrative tasks such as leaving materials, completing a self-evaluation, signing out or simply saying to the substitute teacher coordinator, "Thank you for calling me to sub."

Reflect.

4. As you leave the school building, hopefully, you'll have good thoughts about the students you've helped, the lesson you've taught, the school, and good thoughts about yourself as a sub ...

A SUB IS A ...

warm,
patient,
cheerful,
kind,
loving,
caring,
helpful,
understanding,
responsive,
knowledgeable,
prepared,
respectful,
confident,
resourceful person . . .
sent directly from God to the classroom when the regular teacher is absent.